INTRODUCTION TO THE THOUGHT OF IQBAL

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This book is an English translation of "Introduction a la Pensee D'Iqbal" written by Miss Luce-Claude Maitre. The author has presented within a small compass a penetrating study of the thought of Iqbal with clarity which is characteristic of the French mind. The notable feature of the book is that it treats Iqbal primarily as a thinker and relegates his poetic role to a soiltary chapter at the end. Such a treatment I venture to say, is in accord with the wishes of Iqbal himself to whom the content of his message was of far greater importance than the form in which he expressed it. Enough has been written on the literary and artistic excellence of Iqbal's poems but his great contribution to the intellectual heritage of mankind, by which he will be chiefly remembered by the coming generations, is his philosophy of the human personality which the author has so lucidly presented in her study.

I have translated this book in the hope that it will stimulate the interest of Iqbal's students in his philosophy. The author has been good enough to go through the translation and to revise it wherever she considered it necessary.

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M. A. M. DAR.

For the seeing eye, everything is worth seeing,
Everything is worth being weighed in the scales of vision.

—Iqbal

O Saki, arise and fill my cup with sparkling wine,
Pour moonbeams into the dark night of my thought
That I may lead the wanderer home
And fill the idle onlooker with restless impatience,
That I may go in quest of the new spirit
And become its acknowledged champion!

—Iqbal

(*Asrar-i-Khudi:* Prologue)

IQBAL:
HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Iqbal was born at Sialkot in the Punjab on the 22nd February 1873. His ancestors, who were Brahmins originating from Kashmir, had embraced Islam many generations ago. The poet received his primary and secondary education in Sialkot and, at a very early age, began to write poetry. He had the good fortune of having as his teacher a scholar of distinction, Maulvi Mir Hasan, who soon discovered the talents of his young pupil and encouraged him in every possible way.

At this time *Dagh* (1831-1905) was one of the acknowledged masters of Urdu poetry and Iqbal sent him his poems for correction. Dagh readily agreed to do so but, within a few months, wrote to the young poet that his verses no longer required any revision.

Iqbal moved to Lahore in 1895 to enter the University. That town was then rapidly becoming an intellectual centre. Urdu was gradually replacing Persian throughout India and many societies had been formed at Lahore to encourage its development. These societies organised from time to time literary symposiums at which Iqbal recited his poems. He was not long in establishing his reputation and making a sufficient start in the world of letters to have some of his poems accepted by journals and reviews.

At Lahore, he made the acquaintance of Sir Thomas Arnold who came to exercise a profound influence over him. Whereas Maulvi Mir Hasan had taught the young man the essentials of Muslim culture, Sir Thomas Arnold initiated him to the literature and thought of the West.

At this time, Iqbal wrote some poems which, though lacking the maturity of his later work, distinguished him as a poet of quality. Nevertheless, his first published work was a manual of economics in Urdu.

In 1905 he proceeded to Europe and stayed there for three years—three years which played a decisive role in the evolution of his thought. This was for him a period of preparation rather than of fulfilment. He assiduously frequented the libraries of Cambridge, London and Berlin. He held discussions with European thinkers and scholars. He studied

philosohpy under Professor MacTaggart at Cambridge, and took a doctorate in Philosophy from Munich. His thesis was published in London under the title of "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia".

He was appointed professor of Arabic at the University of London for six months and, on his return to Lahore in 1908, was offered the chair of Philosophy and English Literature. But he soon gave up this post to devote himself to the legal profession.

Poet, prose writer, philosopher, linguist, jurist, politician, teacher, the genius of Iqbal is of a prodigious versatility. He has left us poetry in two languages, Urdu and Persian. In prose, he wrote in Urdu and English on such diverse subjects as philosophy, economics, politics and literature.

Before his stay in Europe, Iqbal had written a certain number of poems in Urdu in which one feels the restlessness of a genius who is striving to find his own way but who is not as yet fully conscious of the mission he was to accomplish. The West completely changed his ideas, he realised the harm which the negative and mystical doctrines had done to India and the necessity of combating the conservative tendencies which were sapping the energy of his people. He took upon himself the gigantic task of rousing millions of human beings and making them cast off the moral inertia which had paralysed their spirits in the course of centuries.

On his return from Europe Iqbal wrote such epoch-making poems as the *Shikwa* and the *Jawab-i-Shikwa* (The Complaint and the Reply to the Complaint) which bear witness to the change working within him but did not as yet give an indication of the message he was to give to the world.

He formulated this message for the first time in *Asrar-i-Khudi* and *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (The Secrets of the Self and the Mysteries of Selflessness) published in 1915 and 1918 respectively. Both these poems were written in Persian.

Asrar-i-Khudi, which is an illustration of the central theme of the Iqbalian philosophy, achieved a considerable success. Professor R. A. Nicholson found it so original and forceful that he translated it into English and had it published in 1920.

Rumuz-i-Bekhudi deals with a similar subject. It is an appeal for individual reform aiming at the regeneration of all individuals in a truly Islamic society.

In *Bang-i-Dira* (The Call of the Bell), a collection of poems in Urdu, is found a complete equilibrium between the poet and the philosopher.

In 1923 appeared the *Payam-i-Mashriq* (The Message of the East) written as a counterpart to the Divan of Goethe, which is a collection of poems in Persian. It reveals a talent of the first order and a perfect mastery of language.

After the publication of *Zabur-i-Ajam* (Persian Psalms), Iqbal wrote his major work, the *Javid Nama* (The Book of Eternity) which is the Divine Comedy of the East.

> What I speak of belongs to another world,
> This book has descended from a different heaven.

In 1935 and 1936 he published successively two collections of poems in Urdu: *Bal-i-Jibril* (The Wing of Gabriel) and *Zarb-i-Kalim* (The Staff of Moses).

His last collection of Urdu and Persian poems, *Armughan-i-Hijaz* (The Gift of Hijaz) was published posthumously.

In 1922, the Order of Knighthood was conferred on him. In 1926 he undertook a journey to South India in the course of which he delivered a series of lectures which have been published in England under the title of "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam."

Iqbal took an active part in the political life of his country. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly of the Punjab in 1927 and, in 1930, was nominated President of the annual session of the Muslim League. It is during this period that he elaborated his plan for the solution of the problems of the Sub-Continent. He became the supporter of the idea of an Islamic State in the North West of India, and the advocates of Pakistan considered him henceforth as their leader.

In 1932 he attended, as a delegate, the Round Table Conference convened in London for the establishment of a constitutional government in India. In the same year he presided over the Muslim Conference.

In 1935 he received the degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of the Punjab.

Though he continued to be very active, his health began to decline. He died on the 21st April 1938, with a smile on his lips, for he had made his own the words of Rumi, his master:

I cast off animality and became a man. Why should I fear to become less when I die?

As soon as he heard the news, Tagore sent the following message: "The death of Sir Mohammad Iqbal has created a void in literature which, like a deep wound, will take a long time to heal. India which occupies but a limited place in the world can ill afford to lose a poet whose poetry has such universal appeal".

Some time before his death, the poet had written the following quatrain:

When I depart from the world
Each one will say: "He was known to me";
But in truth none knows this traveller
Or what he said, and to whom, nor whence he came.

The ever increasing interest shown in his works by the whole world belies these words. That he will be better known and loved, there can be no doubt.

Art thou a mere particle of dust?
Tighten the knot of thy ego;
Hold fast to thy tiny being
How glorious to burnish one's ego
And to test its lustre in the presence of the sun,
Re-chisel then thine ancient frame,
And build a new being;
Such being is real;
Or else thy ego is a mere ring of smoke.

(*Javid Nama*)

Study thyself well. Thou art the flower of the universe,
Thou art the quintessence of nations,
O man! thou art the pupil of the eye of the world.

(*Ghalib*)

My being grew and reached the sky,
The Pleiades sank to rest under the skirts of my garment.

Iqbal is above all a poet but he is also a philosopher. In his works, poetry and philosophy are closely linked together. It is therefore necessary to study his philosophy, at least in its broad outlines, in order to understand his poetry. For this reason, let us first try to place his thought in its original context.

What picture did the East and the West present at the time when Iqbal, having just completed his studies, began to examine and try to resolve the problems which had puzzled him for many years? At the end of the nineteenth century, the West stood at the apex of its glory and was marching from triumph to triumph. The East, on the contrary, was in an extremely distressing and difficult situation, defeated and humiliated by an adversary who seemed to be all-powerful. Why was it so? This was a matter for reflection and Iqbal applied himself to probe beyond the symptoms and search the roots of the malady. He was helped in this quest by his great culture and his knowledge of sociology and history. He soon came to the conclusion that the decadence of the East was largely due to the philosophical systems which taught the renunciation of the Self, the negation of Personality, the indifference to and the detachment from the good things of this world. The whole evil stemmed from the importation into Islam of Platonic and neo-Platonic ideas according to which this world was a mere appearance, an illusion. These ideas, moreover, offered a striking resemblance with those expressed in the Buddhist Vedantas, culminating in the famous doctrine of Monism. This doctrine preached the belief in an immanent God and considered the world as a mere emanation. It substituted pantheistic deism for the transcendent and personal God of the Quran. It led to the blossoming of pseudo-mysticism. We should turn here to the history of Sufism in the East. This philosophical movement achieved such success that its dogmas were finally recognised and adopted by the whole of Islam.

Iqbal takes a stand against this negative and discouraging conception which diverts man away from the realities of life and prevents him from struggling to improve and change his condition. Other Muslim thinkers before him had assailed the doctrine of Monism but they had done this

on purely theological grounds. Iqbal attacked it from a practical standpoint. He vehemently impugned the current ideas and proclaimed that life is real, that we are not the victims of a tragic illusion. To the question: "What is life?", he replied: "It is the individual: its highest form is the Ego in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre". The Iqbalian philosophy is entirely based on the idea of Personality because "the secret of divinity resides in the edification of the Self". "The development of the Self is the awakening of the universe."

> Take this message from me to the Sufis:
> Ye are seeking God through the subtleties of thought;
> I shall serve as a slave the man who worships his Self
> And who sees God in the light of his own Personality.

For Iqbal, there is no universal life. Everything, every being possesses an individuality and its place in the universe depends upon the degree of development of this individuality. Even matter itself, or not-Self, consists of a colony of egos of a low order: life and conscience emerge when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of coordination. Individuality is an ascending movement which takes in its train all living beings. This movement goes up the ladder of existence to the point of man's highest development when he becomes a Personality. "Through the whole gamut of being runs the gradually ascending note of Personality until it attains its perfection in man". Or again: "Each atom of the universe burns to reveal itself, each particle yearns to be a god." "Every atom is a candidate for greatness". Nevertheless, man is not at the end of the process of evolution; he must not be considered as a complete being.

"Physically as well as spiritually, man is a self-contained centre but he is not yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God, the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the completest person. Not that he is finally absorbed in God: on the contrary, he absorbs God Himself into his ego. Life is a forward assimilative movement. It removes all obstructions in its march by assimilating them. Its essence is the continual creation of desires and ideals, and for the purpose of its preservation and expansion it has invented or developed out of itself certain instruments, e.g., the senses, the intellect, etc., which help it to assimilate obstructions. The greatest obstacle in the way of life is matter,

Nature; yet Nature is not evil, since it enables the inner powers of life to unfold themselves. The Ego attains to freedom by the removal of all obstructions in its way. It is partly free, partly determined and reaches fuller freedom by approaching the Individual who is most free—God. In one word, life is an endeavour for freedom".

And Iqbal specifies his position in the following manner:

"The final act is not an intellectual act but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the Ego and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts but something to be made and remade by continuous action. It is a moment of supreme bliss and also a moment of the greatest trial for the ego".

Man should therefore strive first of all to overcome matter and conquer the environment in which he lives. This conquest will bring him closer to God and enable him to attain freedom. On the other hand, the continual creation of desires and ideals will keep him in a constant state of tension:

"Personality is a state of tension and can subsist only if that state is maintained. If the state of tension is not maintained, relaxation will ensue. Since personality or the state of tension is the most valuable achievement of man, he should see that he does not revert to a state of relaxation. That which tends to maintain the state of tension tends to make us immortal".

Thus, we cannot win freedom and immortality unless we make an effort to acquire them. Iqbal has laid great emphasis on the value of effort and struggle. We could give many quotations:

> Do not consort with thy friends on the shores, for there
> Too gently flows the melody of life.
> Plunge into the sea, do battle with the waves,
> For immortality is won through striving!

He even goes so far as to say:

> If by thine efforts thou hast achieved something rare,
> Even though it were a sin, it would bring its own reward.

We can judge the importance of the notion of Personality in the philosophy of Iqbal by the fact that he sees in it the key to the problem of Good and Evil, the source of morals and religion.

"Thus the idea of personality gives us a standard of values; it settles the problem of Good and Evil. That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion and ethics must be judged from the standpoint of personality".

And this is how the poet admonishes the young men of his country who have abandoned themselves to resignation and indifference:

The present age is an angel of death for you;
By giving you the cares of a bread-winner it has strangled your soul.
Your heart trembles at the thought of the fight.
Life is but death when it loses the zest for struggle.
Education has made you strangers to that noble ardour
Which bids the intellect to be fearless and brave.
Nature has given you the sharp eyes of an eagle,
But slavery has endowed you with the miserable vision of a bat!

His criticism extends to all those who are paralysed with fear and have lost the taste for taking risks:

Poets have appeard, Scholars too and philosophers,
This age of a nation's slavery is not an empty age;
But all these worthies share one object in common,
Though each one is past-master in the art of interpretation;
To teach the lions to flee gracefully like the gazelle,
And to forget their leonine traditions of bravery,
They pretend to resolve the problems of their art,
And thus teach the slaves to resign themselves to bondage!

* * *

O Himalayas, O Attock[1] O Ganges,
How long will you remain without colour and without lustre?
The old men of this country are bereft of intelligence,
And the young ones are devoid of love.
The East and the West are alike free but we still be slaves.
Our bricks are being used for building others' monuments.
The people of India are torn by dissensions,
And have revived old controversies;

1. A river in West Pakistan.

Until a nation from the West has appeared to act as arbitrator
Between the Faithful and the unbelievers.

* * *

Who knows the destiny of India which is still
The brightest jewel in a foreign crown?
The peasant is like a carcase exhumed from the grave,
Whose rotten winding-sheet is still buried in the earth;
His spirit and body are alike hypothecated to others,
Neither the house nor the owner remain.
You have resigned yourselves to be the slaves of Europe:
It is you I reproach, not Europe
How then can one, according to Iqbal, win freedom and immortality?

What are the weapons which man must use in this contest?

The most effective weapon which makes all victories possible is Love. Iqbal gives to this word a very wide meaning. It is for him the regenerating principle of the universe, the very measure of man:

Love is eternal and will end with eternity;
Many will be those who will seek love.
When the Day of Judgment comes
Those who have not loved will be condemned.

* * *

This luminous point whose name is Self
Is the spark of life beneath our dust.
By love it is made more lasting,
More alive, more burning, more glowing.

* * *

It is love which enables man to attain true greatness:

* * *

My being was an unfinished statue,
Love chiselled me; I became a man.

And the poet exclaims: "O God, may love's journey never end!"

But love cannot defeat the forces of evil and impart to man his true character unless it is accompanied by detachment. A state of detach-

ment is a source of unlimited wealth to him who practises it. It places him directly above all contingencies. It inspires in him a legitimate pride:

> I am a beggar without need,
> I am proud of it.

During his progress towards the ideal image he has formed of himself, man will have to fight unflinchingly to achieve what he thinks to be good and just. He will not bow before anyone; he will not recognise anything but Truth:

> Do not submit to anything but Truth which will
> Make a lion of thee.

To be completely himself, not to be the follower of anyone—such is the goal which Iqbal sets for man, the path which he marks out for him:

> Kindle the fire hidden in thine own dust,
> For the light of others is not worth having.

Life then becomes a stirring journey towards an ideal tinged with desire and promise:

> Rise, O thou who art strange to life's mystery!
> Rise, intoxicated with the wine of an ideal,
> An ideal resplendent as the dawn,
> A fire which consumes all that is not God,
> An ideal higher than heaven,
> Bewitching, captivating men's hearts,
> Which destroys the ancient falsehoods!

The philosophy of Iqbal is a philosophy which puts all its trust in man in whom it sees the holder of infinite possibilities, capable of changing the world and of changing himself: because man is essentially a creator. Iqbal sees in him a kind of demiurge, a rather disquieting rival for God:

> God created the world, man made it even more fair;
> Is man destined to become the rival of God?

And man, intoxicated with his creative force, hurls a defiance at God:

Thou didst create the night and I made the lamp,
Thou didst create clay and I made the cup.
Thou didst create the deserts, mountains and forests,
I produced the orchards, gardens and groves;
It is I who turn stone into a mirror,
And it is I who turn poison into an antidote!

* * *

God decreed: "It is like this and say no more about it."
Man replied: "Verily, it is like this, but it ought to be like that.

* * *

The glory of man lies in his creative power,
The moon and the stars are merely repeating the duties assigned to them.

Iqbal exhorts man to become what he is, to become as great as nature. And his poetry is a cry of mixed sorrow and joy:

If thou art alive, create: seize like me heaven with thine own hands!
How long wilt thou beg for light like Moses on Mount Sinai?
Let a flame like that of the Burning Bush spring forth from thyself!

The Iqbalian philosophy opens to man dazzling prospects. It liberates him by teaching him how to become the master of his own destiny. "Unborn roses are hidden in the skirts of my garment", the poet has said: these roses are now in full bloom and we make bright nosegays with them.

Make of thy clay a man,
Make of man a star!
Arise and create a new world,
Wrap thyself in flames, be an Abraham!
To accept a world in contradiction with thy wishes,
Is to fling away thy buckler on the battle-field!
The strong-willed man who is master of himself,
Moulds the world according to his own desires:
If the world is not to his taste
He will hazard war with heaven!

* * *

Art thou alive? Be enthusiastic, be a creator,

Be a conqueror of the universe like Me![1]
Smash the world into pieces if it does not suit thee,
And bring forth another world from the depths of thy being.
It is irritating for a free man to live in a world made by others.
He who is devoid of creative power
Is naught for me but an infidel and a heretic;
It was not given to him to partake of my splendour,
He did not gather any fruit from the date-palm of life.
O man of God, be as sharp as a sword!

* * *

The Prophet said that if thou knockest at a door long enough,
It is bound to open itself in the end.
If day after day you bore the earth to dig a well,
Pure water will not fail to gush forth in the end.

* * *

The child is born out of the bursting of the maternal womb;
Man is born out of the bursting of the world.

* * *

Man dies from lack of conviction.

* * *

What is life? A mine of precious stones
Of which thou art the trustee, not the rightful proprietor.

---

1. It is God Who speaks

Yesterday, the Master went roaming about the city,
a lantern in his hand,
Saying: 'I am tired of demons and beasts.
I am eager to meet a man!
My heart is weary of these weak-spirited companions;
I want to see the lion of God and Rustam, son of Zal.[1]
They said: 'He is not to be found, we have sought him long'.
He replied: 'A thing that is not to be found—this is
what I am in search of'.

These verses of Rumi, the great Persian mystic, appear on the fly-leaf of the combined edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi* and *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*. Iqbal has not chosen them arbitrarily: his entire philosophy is in effect a quest and, it may even be said, a conquest of man. To reveal to man his infinite possibilities and to direct him towards a richer and fuller life—such was his aim. But he is not content with vain formulas and learned theories. He has not left merely an alluring description of the Perfect Man (*Mard-i-Momin*); he has shown us how to attain to that high degree of humanity. It is in this sense that it can be said of him that he was a practical philosopher: his philosophy does not propose an abstract ideal which fails to take account of reality; it aims, on the contrary, at giving us practical advice for the proper conduct of our lives. The Perfect Man is the outcome of an impassioned search, a triumphant affirmation of the dignity and, Iqbal would say, of the divinity of man. ("When man realises all his possibilities, he becomes God").

Transmute thy handful of dust into gold,
Kiss the threshold of the Perfect Man.

Humanity is heading towards the creation of an ideal race of individuals but the coming of the Superman will not be possible until the Ego has gone through a course of evolution in which three stages can be distinguished:

(I) Obedience to the law.

1. Rustam the Hercules of Iran

(2) Self-control, which is the highest form of self-consciousness or Personality.

(3) Divine viceregency.

"The *Na'ib* (Superman) is the viceregent of God on earth. He is the completest Ego, the goal of humanity, the acme of life both in mind and body; in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. The highest power is united in him to the highest knowledge. In his life, thought and action, instinct and reason become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth".

Iqbal greets his coming in these words:

Appear, O rider of Destiny!
Appear, O light of the dark realm of Change!
Silence the noise of the nations.
Imparadise our ears with thy music!
Arise and tune the harp of brotherhood,
Give us back the cup of the wine of love!
Bring once more days of peace to the world,
Give a message of peace to them that seek battle!
Mankind is the cornfield and thou the harvest.
Thou art the goal of life's caravan.

(*Asrar-i-Khudi*)

Iqbal has called himself an idealist, a visionary, and yet it can be said that if he had his head in the clouds, his feet were firmly planted in the earth. He does not want his superman to remain a myth and to be considered as the feverish dream of a poet. That is why he does not make him an isolated phenomenon; he well understands that an individual is part and parcel of the group to which he belongs.

The individual exists as a part of society,
Alone he is nothing.
A wave is a wave only inside the river.
Outside of it, it is nothing.

* * *

The individual lost in the community
Is like a drop which, seeking to expand, becomes an ocean.

Man can achieve his highest possibilities only within and through society. This society must, however, fulfil certain conditions which Iqbal has formulated very clearly:

1. It must have a spiritual basis which is provided by the principle of monotheism. "The State, according to Islam, is only an effort to realise the spiritual in a human organisation".

"The new culture finds the foundation of world-unity in the principle of *Tauhid* (Monotheism). Islam, as a polity is only a practical means of making this principle a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind. It demands loyalty to God, not to thrones. And since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to God virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature".

2. It must be centred around a leader or a prophet, that is to say, for the Muslims, around Muhammad.

3. It must have a code, the Quran, and a centre, Mecca.

4. It ought to apply itself to conquering the forces of Nature. Iqbal considers that the decadence of the East, its economic and political disintegration are due to a large extent to its neglect of science.

5. It ought to maintain traditions which are a factor of stability.

It is interesting to note here that, for Iqbal, tradition is all which is part of the national heritage, all that lends its particular character to a country and distinguishes it from another country. It is not so much the traditions (precepts) transmitted from generation to generation by venerable individuals. Iqbal knows that everything evolves in the world, thought as well as matter, and that certain "verities" must at times be re-examined. "If to follow tradition had been a virtue, the Prophet would have also walked in the footsteps of his ancestors". "We refuse to follow the track which has been trodden by the caravan."

"Islam," says Iqbal, "is not a departmental affair; it is neither mere thought, nor mere feeling, nor mere action: it is an expression of the whole man". It is not a religion in the ordinary sense of the word; it is a philosophy of life which seeks to ensure the harmonious development of the individual and the transformation of humanity. "In Islam it is the same reality which appears as church looked at from one point of view and state from another......Thus, the Quran considers it necessary to unite religion and state, ethics and politics in a single revelation".

Old are the stars and old is the sky,
I want a world newly born!

Iqbal cherishes the vision of a world state in which all the Muslims would form an indivisible community. He accuses Nationalism (in the narrow sense of the word) as well as Imperialism of destroying the feelings of brotherhood, of sowing the seeds of war and of "robbing us of Paradise".

"I am opposed to nationalism as it is understood in Europe because I see in it the germs of atheistic materialism which I consider as the very great danger to modern humanity. Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue which has a place in the moral life of man. Nevertheless, what really matters most to man is his faith, his culture, his historical traditions. These are the things which in my view are worth living for and dying for and not the piece of earth with which the spirit of man happens to be temporarily associated".

And he adds:

"So long as this so-called democracy, this wretched nationalism and this degraded imperialism have not crumbled into dust, so long as men have not demonstrated by their actions the belief that the entire world is one family of God, so long as the distinctions of race, colour and nationality have not been completely swept away, we will not be able to lead a happy life and the fine ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never be realised".

Iqbal has always taken a very strong stand regarding racial discriminations. He is the author of this very significant verse:

Whoever makes distinctions of colour and race will perish.

And again:

No Afghan, Turks or sons of Tartary,
But of one garden and one trunk are we....
We all the nurslings of one springtime be.

* * * *

What is the final goal of Nature and the inner purpose of Islam ?
The universal brotherhood of man and plenitude of love.

Smash the idols of blood, colour and race and lose
thyself in the community;[1]
Abolish all distinctions between the Tartars, the
Persians and the Afghans.

* * * *

Rapacity has split up humanity into warring camps,
Speak therefore the language of love and teach the
lesson of brotherhood!
What are all these distinctions of Indians, Afghans
Tartars and Khorasanis?[2]
Thou art tied to the seashore; leap forward into
limitless freedom!
Thy wings are covered with the dust of creed and colour,
O bird of the Haram,[3] shake thy wings before
taking to flight!

* * * *

The God-intoxicated fakir is neither of the East nor
of the West;
I do not belong to Delhi, nor to Ispahan or Samarkand.
I say what I believe to be the truth;
I am not deceived by the priests nor by the glitter of
modern civilisation.
Friends and strangers are alike displeased with me,
Because I have never mistaken poison for sugar.
It is difficult for a man who knows and sees the truth
To confuse a mound of dust with Mount Damavand![4]

* * * *

What is religion? To discover one's inner secrets.

In short, Iqbal dreamt of a world governed by religion, not by politics. He condemned Machiavelli, "that worshipper of false gods".

"It is because the political ideas such as are taking shape in India to-day, may affect its (Islam's) structure that I am interested in politics".

1. The Islamic Society.
2. Natives of Khorasan a province of Iran.
3. The Sacred precincts at Mecca (Saudi Arabia).
4. A mountain in Iran.

And he says elsewhere:

"Politics has its roots in the spiritual life of man.. Religion is a force of great importance in the life of the individual as well as of nations".

...... "And religion which in its highest manifestations is neither dogma nor priesthood nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves.... It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and wither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition and a civilisation which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values".

Lastly, it may be recalled that Iqbal has been the first to advocate the creation of a Muslim state in the North West of India where it would be possible to lay the foundations of a truly Islamic society. He has been, along with Mohammed Ali Jinnah, one of the founders of Pakistan.

* * * *

An English critic having expressed the opinion that in spite of the universal character of its principles, the message of Iqbal lacked universality because he had addressed himself above all to the Muslim world, the poet replied as follows:

"The object of my Persian *Masnavis* is not to attempt an advocacy of Islam. My real purpose is to seek a better social order and to present to the world a universally acceptable ideal (of life and action), but it is impossible for me, in the effort to define this ideal, to ignore the social system and values of Islam whose most important objective is to demolish all artificial and pernicious distinctions of caste, creed, colour and economic status. Islam is violently opposed to the idea of racial superiority which is the greatest obstacle in the way of international unity and co-operation; in fact, Islam and racial exclusiveness are absolutely antithetic. The racial ideal is the greatest enemy of mankind and it is the duty of all well-wishers of the human race to eradicate it. When I realised that the conception of nationalism based on differences of race and country was beginning to spread to the Islamic world also and that the Muslims were in danger of giving up the universality of their ideal in favour of a narrow patriotism and false nationalism, I felt it my duty, as a Muslim and a well-wisher of humanity, to remind them of their true role in the drama of evolution. No doubt, I am intensely devoted to Islam, but

I have chosen the Islamic community as my starting point not because of any national or religious prejudice but because it is the most convenient way to approach the problem".

Conversation between the "Indian disciple" and his "spiritual preceptor", Rumi:

The Disciple

My thought has scaled the heavens but I remain lowly and miserable on earth. I cannot make my way in the world; I stumble at every step. Why am I incapable of managing my worldly affairs? Why is the spiritually wise a fool in worldly matters?

Rumi

He who strides across the skies should not find it difficult to walk on the earth.

* * *

If thou can't stand unshaken before the Divine Light,
Consider thyself as living and eternal as God.

(*Javid Nama*)

METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Come if thou would'st know the secret of everlasting life!
Come, if thou would'st win both heaven and earth!

(A) Intuition as a method of knowledge

The small book of Iqbal entitled *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* marks an important stage in his work. It contains the main point of his message and shows clearly the object the poet had in view, namely, to reconcile religion and philosophy in Islam.

In order to perform this task of reconstruction, he did not turn to Greek thought for support: on the contrary, he subjected it to close criticism. He pointed out that it is purely speculative as it does not take any account of the data of experience. Now, all knowledge must rest on experience; it is impossible *a priori*. Iqbal takes a stand against the abstract dualism of classical philosophy which keeps mind and matter in water-tight compartments. "With Islam the ideal and the real are not two opposing forces which cannot be reconciled". "Islam says yes to the world of matter and points the way to master it".

Iqbal rather draws his inspiration from modern philosophy which, since Kant, has been essentially empirical; he finds it closer to the spirit of Islam which considers the world as real and has always insisted on the necessity of experience as a source of knowledge. But the resemblance ends there. Modern science and philosophy stress the importance of sense experience but have a tendency to affirm that the world of the senses alone exists; they deny the possibility of any reality beyond the domain of matter. Islam, on the contrary, proclaims the existence of a transcendent reality.

Kant set a limit to the knowledge of empirical reality; he claimed that we cannot know anything outside the world of matter: Iqbal refuses to subscribe to such a conception. He will not let himself be shut up in the prison built by the senses and Reason; he wishes to shatter the barriers of Space and Time, to have a direct revelation of the mysteries of the Ego, of its Immortality and Freedom. This revelation cannot be obtained through the senses or by reason; we shall therefore have recourse to an experience of a very particular type which Iqbal calls *Intuition*. It is thanks to Intuition that we shall be able to seize and apprehend the Absolute Reality.

In fact, this appeal to Intuition was nothing new; it had been heard many times. All the great mystics have seen in it the only instrument capable of opening for them the Portals of the Absolute. Nevertheless, most of them, like Ghazali, considered intuition as a faculty of knowledge distinct from all other faculties and belonging to a category radically different from thought and perception. But Iqbal does not agree with this view. He asserts that intuition is similar to other faculties of knowledge. It is admittedly a matter of feeling but this does not involve a plunge into subjectivism; this feeling has in effect an essentially cognitive character, it is therefore as objective as perception. But whereas the mystic takes his start from the apprehension of Ultimate Reality and has a tendency to restrict to this the function of intuition, Iqbal starts from the intuition of his own self, thus bringing intuition closer to ordinary experience; and from the intuition of the Self he moves on to the intuition of the Absolute Reality.

"Intuition reveals life as a centralising ego. This knowledge, however imperfect as giving us only a point of departure, is a direct revelation of the ultimate nature of reality. Thus the facts of experience justify the inference that the ultimate nature of Reality is spiritual and must be conceived as an ego. But the aspiration of religion soars higher than that of philosophy. Philosophy is an intellectual view of things and as such does not care to go beyond a concept which can reduce all the rich variety of experience to a system. It sees Reality from a distance as it were. Religion seeks a closer contact with Reality. The one is theory; the other is living experience, association, intimacy".

(B) The World of Matter

Iqbal entertains no doubt whatever about the objective existence of the external world; the testimony of our senses constitutes according to him an irrefutable proof of it. The duality of subject and object—which is the necessary basis of all knowledge—provides us with a means of confirmation. Life consists in an incessant struggle between the Ego and its environment. The Ego invades the environment and the environment invades the Ego. If matter were only an illusion, how would this struggle be possible? One does not fight with a phantom.

There remains to determine the exact nature of matter. The old conception inherited from Aristotle considered the world as a fixed product incapable of development, situated in a void called Space. Einstein has

demonstrated the falsity of this theory and Iqbal proves to be in complete agreement with him without deviating in any manner from the way dictated by the Quran. Has not the Prophet said that God will regenerate the world? Hereafter he will give it a new birth".

The universe is not, for Iqbal, a finished product, immutable, created once for all; it is a reality in progress. Matter, far from being inert and static, is ever-flowing and ever-changing. The universe "is not a thing but an act" and the passage from chaos to cosmos, the appearance of life and conscience are the result of a process of evolution. This process can never have any limit because there is no end to progress.

The nature of matter cannot be revealed to us either by perception or by thought because these two faculties assume that Reality is immobile, permanent. But whereas Bergson claims that one can know matter through intuition, Iqbal considers the latter as helpless in that domain. Therefore, he asks us to turn to that which is familiar—to the subject and to his personal experience. The subject must take his own self as a starting-point. The principle of analogy allows us to conclude that the universe is of the same nature as the Self: it is a unique Self endowed with a free and creative will.

(C) God or the Absolute

O man of courage, capture God Himself with thy lasso!

Now, this free and creative will can be conceived in two ways. It may be a blind force without any purpose or it may be a conscious force directed towards an end. Iqbal maintains that the essence of the universe is that of "a creative force rationally directed". But then the question arises as to whether the world is directed by a being external to itself or whether it is an intelligent Self in pursuit of a design. The first hypothesis is untenable because it would make initiative and liberty an illusion, the end being imposed from outside and everything regulated and determined in advance for all eternity. On the other hand, this Being himself would not really be a creator of matter which he directs and shapes according to his will. He would be no more than an inventor. It is therefore necessary for us to accept the second alternative and to consider the entire universe as possessing a centre of reference, a personality.

Let us now consider what relation exists between the Supreme Ego and finite egos. This relation can be conceived in three ways:

(1) The Supreme Ego is the only reality. It absorbs in its Being the finite egos which have no existence of their own.

(2) The Supreme Ego embraces the finite egos in its Being without obliterating their existence.

(3) The Supreme Ego is considered as apart and above the finite egos.

Iqbal squarely rejects this last stand. It opens a gulf between the finite and the infinite. "The infinite reached by contradicting the finite is a false infinite". He equally rejects the first stand because the intuition of the self reveals that it has an existence of its own. Moreover, mystic experience leads to the affirmation of human personality rather than to its negation; the absorption of the mystic in God is of an emotional and not of an existential order. We must therefore conclude that the Supreme Ego contains the finite egos in its Being without obliterating their existence.

It follows that the Supreme Ego is not transcendent in the manner God is conceived by the theists of the classical school. But it is not immanent in the sense understood by the pantheists of the traditional type because it is a personal reality and not an impersonal force. It has like us a personality, that is to say, the consciousness of its own identity, but its identity is not within the reach of our experience. It is therefore transcendent. In brief, it is at the same time transcendent and immanent and yet neither the one nor the other. Immanence and Transcendence are both aspects of the Supreme Being, but Iqbal lays more stress on transcendence than on immanence.

"Thus a searching criticism of all the facts of experience.... bring us to the conclusion that the Ultimate Reality is a rationally directed creative force. To interpret this force as an ego is not to fashion God after the image of man. It is only to accept the simple fact of experience that life is not a formless substance but an organising principle of unity which holds together and focalises the dispersing disposition of the living organism for a constructive purpose".

(D) Space and Time

I complain of Thy avarice, O God! Thou hast reserved the whole
of Space for Thyself,
And Thou hast confined me within the three dimensions!

Iqbal agrees on the whole with the theory of Relativity in so far as it concerns the nature of Time and Space. According to him, Space and

Time are not objective realities, foreign and external to the human Ego, they are only aspects in which the latter manifests itself. Neither do they belong to distinct categories totally independent of each other. A kinship exists between the space-time relation and the body-spirit relation. Time is the spirit of Space.

Time and Space are not fixed and unchanging modes as Kant had imagined. There is no absolute space in which things are situated: Space is "a dynamic appearance". The space of human beings can be measured according to three dimensions—length, breadth and depth. It is however possible to reduce or to enlarge our dimensions: a level of experience exists in which there is neither space nor time. The space of God is "free from all dimensions".

We measure time through the concepts of past, present and future; we imagine it as a succession of instants, as a line in space. This is successive time. In real Time or Duration everything is given simultaneously—past, present and future form one "organic unity".

"Bergson has taught us that time is not an infinite line (in the spatial sense of the word) through which we must pass whether we wish it or not. This idea of time is adulterated. Pure time has no length.... By breaking up time into instants, we spatialise it and then find difficulty in overcoming it...... We are subject to time so long as we look upon time as something spatial. Spatialised time is a fetter which life has forged itself in order to assimilate the present environment. In reality we are timeless and it is possible to realise our timelessness even in this life."

Space and Time are both related to the ego; that is why they appear to us as a matter of points and instants. But man, if he realises the potentialities which are within him, can transcend space and time. A revolution in his conscience can liberate him from the fetters of successive time: he will then live in pure duration unadulterated by space, "in a unique moment"[1].

"Verily towards God is thy limit". These words of the Quran sum up the Iqbalian philosophy. It is undoubtedly mystic philosophy but not in the sense in which the word is ordinarily understood. Iqbal has

1. Dr. I. H. Enver: *The Metaphysics of Iqbal*, Lahore, 1944.

not sought in mysticism a tent under which to take shelter; he wished to make of his religious experience a living force.

"God is the light of the heavens and of the earth, His light is like a niche in which is a lamp—the lamp encased in a glass—the glass as it were a brilliant star lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil gives light even though no fire did touch it—light upon light". (Quran)

IQBAL AND ORIENTAL THOUGHT

I never begged anyone for eyes to see with,
I never looked at the universe but through my own eyes.

This statement of Iqbal is not gratuitous, for he is undeniably above all an original thinker. In spite of his erudition and vast culture, he never echoed borrowed ideas. But no writer is entirely impervious to present and past intellectual movements. He is inevitably influenced by his knowledge of foreign and native literatures. We shall therefore attempt here to discover whether affinities exist between the ideas of Iqbal and those of the other great thinkers of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Let us point out however that the Iqbalian philosophy, which is essentially dynamic, differs more from oriental philosophy than it resembles it.

But how would it be possible for a Muslim to remain uninfluenced by the Quran? It can be said that the philosophy of Iqbal finds its germs in it, at least in its broad outlines. The poet refers to it unceasingly, and he has scattered throughout his works copious notes which bear witness to his anxiety not to deviate from the way marked out by the Prophet.

The affirmation of individuality is proclaimed categorically by the Quran. The Book rejects the doctrine of redemption and declares in unequivocal terms that it is impossible for an individual to assume the burden of another. Besides, every individual has a right only to that which is due to his own personal effort. Immortality and freedom can be won only if we strive to achieve them.

The idea of the superman runs through the Quran. Man is capable of an endless progress and he will succeed in making himself master of the universe. The more he advances in his evolution, the more he resembles God. "(He who knows himself knows God"—"Create in yourself the Attributes of God" : the comparison here is particularly significant.)

The idea that the human being cannot come into full bloom in isolation, that in order to live he must remain closely associated with other human beings, is in accord with the teachings of the Quran.

Lastly, the ideal society, that is to say the society best equipped for the development of the Ego as visualised by Iqbal, conforms to the rules of conduct set forth in the Quran for human societies.

If we add that the Iqbalian conception of Time coincides with that

of the Sacred Book—"Don't vilify Time because Time is God", said the Prophet—we see that the influence of the Quran on the great thinker is not negligible and that it deserves to be specially noted.

It is extremely interesting to note that Iqbal chose as his Master and guide the great mystic poet *Maulana Rumi* (1202-1273), the author of the famous *Masnavi*, which is said to be the Quran in Persian.

In the prologue to *Asrar-i-Khudi* (The Secrets of the Self) Iqbal relates how Rumi appeared to him in a vision and ordered him to stand up and sing:

> Arise, give a new life to every living soul!
> By saying 'Arise!' quicken the living!
> Arise and set thy foot on another path,
> Put aside the passionate melancholy of old,
> Become familiar with the art of talking,
> O bell of the caravan, awake!
> At these words my bosom was enkindled
> And swelled with emotion like the flute;
> I rose like music from the string,
> To prepare a paradise for the ear,
> I unveiled the mystery of the Self
> And disclosed its wondrous secret to the world.

In the preface to *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (The Mysteries of Selflessness) he quotes verses of Rumi which are now reproduced on the first page of the combined edition of the two poems.

In *Javid Namah* (The Book of Eternity) Rumi accompanies Iqbal on a long journey in the course of which they visit the heavens and various planets—a spiritual quest which will end in the dazzling splendour of Divine Light.

In *Bal-i-Jibril* (The Wing of Gabriel) Iqbal presents himself as a disciple of Rumi whom he addresses with affection and respect, soliciting from him support and enlightenment.

Lastly, in *Payam-i-Mashriq* (The Message of the East) Iqbal gives an imaginary account of a meeting in heaven between Goethe and Rumi. A very lively dialogue takes place which tends to demonstrate the identity of themes of *Faust* and of the *Masnavi*.

Rumi has always exercised a powerful influence on Muslim thinkers. His *Masnavi* is read everywhere, in schools and mosques. A spiritual

order has even been founded under his aegis and is known by the name of "Maulavia". But this does not sufficiently explain the admiration and affection which Iqbal feels for him: it must be due to special reasons which we may now apply ourselves to discover.

On examination, the resemblance between the ideas of the two great thinkers soon becomes evident. Contrary to all expectations, Rumi is in favour of a life of action and struggle because he considers, as does Iqbal, that immortality and freedom have got to be won. He goes even so far as to say:

> A useless struggle is better than inaction.

Both poets have the same conception of love which they consider as the mainstay of personality, as the only force capable of transfiguring the universe.

> At one bound love resolved all my problems:
> I had imagined the earth and the sky to be boundless!

Iqbal and Rumi both believe in human perfectibility and they have prophesied the coming of a race of supermen. They again agree in saying that this race will not represent an aristocracy as envisaged by Nietzsche for example.

Rumi is convinced that immortality does not mean annihilation of the self and its absorption in God. The individual in front of the infinite is like a red hot iron in the fire which remains fire and iron at one and the same time; he is like a star which loses itself at dawn in the brilliant light of the sun. This is the conclusion at which Iqbal also arrives.

We have already seen that the Iqbalian philosophy is based on a sharp reaction against the mystic doctrine of Monism to which a serious blow had already been dealt by a thinker known under the name of *Mujaddid* (born in 1564). The adepts of Monism teach that the Supreme Being is one and that nothing exists outside of Him: in consequence, the world is unreal, illusory. Mujaddid, on the contrary, asserts that the world is distinct from God, that is to say, it is real and endowed with an objective existence. This is the position taken up by Iqbal as well.

Let us note also a point which is common to Iqbal and the Muslim theologian Al-Ghazali (1058-1111): the importance they give to intuition as a source of knowledge. But while Ghazali separates thought and intui-

tion into water-tight compartments, Iqbal associates them closely and makes them interpenetrate each other.

The thought of Iqbal has hardly been marked by oriental thought outside of Islam and, within Islam, we have seen that the influences of the Quran and Rumi are the only ones which really count.

IQBAL AND WESTERN THOUGHT

Iqbal's stay in the West brought about a complete change in his thought. He had until then hesitated to make a choice between contemplation and action, not knowing how to reconcile the two modes of life which equally attracted him. In Europe he acquired a taste for effort and strife; he renounced such passivity as had crushed all spirit in him.

He who had written:

> What they call life is nothing but forgetfulness,
> Drowsiness, drunkenness, indifference and unconsciousness.

now proclaimed:

> Life consists in movement;
> Such is the law which rules the world.
> On this route, a halt is impossible;
> To remain static means death.
>
> * * *
>
> Life is eternal, always quivering, always young.
>
> * * *
>
> The only constant thing in the world is change.

or again:

> Everything lives by continuous strife and struggle;
> I am continually thirsty as though I had fire beneath my feet.

Iqbal was never dazzled by Western civilization. It only inspired distrust in him. Its foundations, built on materialism, seemed to him rather fragile. He saw in it only a polished exterior which would not stand the test of time, the Light of God being alone capable of bestowing a durable lustre.

> Although Europe is radiating with the splendours of art and sciences,
> In truth, this Valley of Darkness lacks the Fountain of Life.

And he predicted the decline of Europe in these words:

> O dwellers of the West, God's earth is not a shop ;
> The gold which you believe to be pure will turn out to be spurious.
> Your civilisation is going to commit suicide with its own dagger;

The nest built on a frail bough is bound to be a transitory abode.

* * *

Like a ripe fruit, Europe is about to fall;
Let us see in whose lap it falls.

In spite of this, Iqbal who had a profound knowledge of European culture, could not fail to be influenced—even unbeknown to him—by movements of thought with which he came in contact in the course of his studies or journeys. Let us therefore try to see whether common points can be found here and there between his philosophy and that of some of the great Western thinkers.

Greek thought has exercised an enormous influence in Europe, and it has spread its tentacles further as far as Islam. Iqbal considered this influence harmful in many respects and he often emphasised that Islamic culture is essentially different from Greek culture. He always disapproved of the grafting of Hellenic thought on Islamic thought. Aristotle alone appears to have some hold on his attention and there is some resemblance between his Ideal Man and the Perfect Man of Iqbal. On the other hand, the two philosophers have completely different conceptions of the world: to the fixed universe of Aristotle, Iqbal opposes a universe in continual change.

The German idealist philosophers have made a very slight impression on the thought of Iqbal who goes some of the way with Kant; he however soon parts company with him. Both of them consider space and time as subjective realities, that is to say, not having any existence apart from the subject. From this subjectivity of time and space, Kant concluded that we can know only things as they appear to us, the "Phenomena", and that the "Noumena", or things in themselves, always escape us. It amounts to saying that metaphysics is impossible.

Iqbal would not restrict knowledge to empirical reality. He believes that man can attain to Absolute Reality not through his reason and senses but by having recourse to a unique experience which he calls Intuition. To see God face to face is not for him a poetic metaphor.

It is undeniable that a fairly close affinity exists between the thought of Iqbal and that of Bergson. What strikes one most is that the two men, in order to resolve the philosophical problems which occupy their

minds, turn not to reason but to a faculty of a particular character, Intuition. On analysis, however, fundamental differences soon begin to appear.

For Bergson, the *Elan Vital* is a blind force, capricious, arbitrary and unforeseeable; it leads nowhere, it has no purpose. For Iqbal, on the contrary, the creative will is of the same nature as thought and intelligence; it has an object and is oriented towards an end. The universe must be conceived as "a creative life rationally directed".

Matter, according to Bergson, is relatively passive and inert; it is the inversion of the principle of life. The *Elan*, in order to overcome this passivity and inertia, has created organic beings; these beings are all endowed with an individuality which becomes Personality and consciousness in man. But Personality is not an end in itself, it is nothing but an instrument at the service of the *Elan* which gropingly seeks to conquer its freedom. Moreover, it is nothing but a temporary phase, a transitory form of the *Elan*; it has no genuine reality because it does not exist outside of itself: it is nothing but a projection, a projected shadow.

Such a conception is in complete disagreement with the thought of Iqbal. He considers matter as essentially living and active; it changes and transforms itself ceaselessly. Nature in its evolution describes an ascending movement which ranges from the most elementary individuality to the human personality. Moreover, Iqbal firmly believes in the reality and the existence of the Ego; it may be, as Bergson maintains, a manifestation of the *Elan* but this does not imply that it must be considered as a shadow without substance.

For Iqbal, the *Elan* culminates and finds its justification in the Supreme Ego or God, for Bergson it remains for ever the Supreme Reality. The former is led to Monotheism, the latter to Pantheism.

The critics very often tend to exaggerate the influence of Nietzschean philosophy on the thought of Iqbal. They come very near to making of Iqbal a servile disciple of Nietzsche; this is a judgment which is at the very least ill-considered.

In the first place, Nietzsche is an atheist and Iqbal a believer; the one wants to establish the kingdom of God on the earth while the other proclaims that God is dead. Divine revelation is, according to Iqbal, the supreme reward of man, for Nietzsche religion is nothing but a drug strong enough to lull the masses to sleep.

It is true that both of them are aiming at the creation of a superior

type of man, the superman. Both of them believe that "man is a bridge", that he is "something which must be surpassed". But the superman of Nietzsche is an incarnation of violent and merciless "will power"; the superman of Iqbal finds his object and strength in love and it is on love that he relies for transfiguring the world.

For Nietzsche the "Will to Power" is the lever which gives an impetus to entire Creation. It is from this standpoint that religion, morals, art and science must be explained. Iqbal explains them from the point of view of Personality which is for him the pivot of Reality.

The Nietzschean man, like the Iqbalian man, lives in a perpetual state of tension but the former's aim is to glorify his physical and mental force by breaking on his way all that could hinder him, whereas the latter seeks to purify and ennoble himself without destroying anything on his path. The one preaches fanaticism, the other tolerance.

Nietzsche teaches that there are two races of men, the masters and the slaves. In the eyes of Iqbal, all human beings are equally precious:

> Humanity consists in respect for man,
> So acquaint thyself with the dignity of man!

Writing on the "Muslim Democracy" in the "New Era", Iqbal said:

"The Democracy of Europe originates mainly in the economic regeneration of European societies. Nietzsche, however, has a horror of this "rule of the herd" and despairing of the plebeian he bases all higher culture on the maintenance and development of an aristocracy of supermen. But is there really nothing to hope from the plebeian? The Democracy of Islam is not the result of any extension of economic possibilities; it is a spiritual principle based on the assumption that every human being is a centre of latent power the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character. Out of the plebeian material Islam has formed men of the greatest nobility. Is not the democracy of early Islam an experimental refutation of the ideas of Nietzsche?"

For Iqbal, human progress follows an ascending and infinite line; it does not know any limit. For Nietzsche, it describes a circular movement; the process of evolution has to be started over and over again. This is what he calls Eternal Recurrence. We are condemned to turn round and round. This conception is disheartening and pessimistic. What is the use of struggling if our actions do not count at all and if we

are bound to return endlessly to our starting-point? Thus, for Nietzsche the universe is not heading towards any end, it is nothing but a well wound up mechanism. For Iqbal, on the contrary, it is a conscious force which does not describe a complete cycle and is, therefore, truly creative. There are thus grounds for optimism.

Here is what Iqbal says of Nietzsche in the *Payam-i-Mashriq:*

"His voice is a peal of thunder. Those who desire sweet songs should fly from him. He has thrust a dagger into the heart of the West. His hands are red with the blood of Christianity. He has built his temple on the foundations of Islam; he has the heart of a believer but his brain refuses to believe. Enter the fire of this Nimrod fearlessly for if thou hast the faith of Abraham, thou shalt not be burnt. The fire itself will turn, on the contrary, into a garden for thee".

It follows from the foregoing that Iqbal owes very little to European thought. He came into close contact with it only to withdraw from it afterwards. Who has applied more strictly than himself the rule on which he insisted so much?

Do not cheapen thy personality by imitation,
Guard it because it is a priceless jewel.
If thou hast the coin of poetry in thy purse,
Rub it on the touchstone of life.
For a long time thou hast turned about on a bed of silk,
Accustom thyself to rough cotton!
Throw thyself on the burning sand
And plunge into the fountain of Zemzem![1]
How long wilt thou lament like a nightingale,
How long wilt thou make thine abode in the garden?

(*Asrar-i-Khudi*)

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1. The Sacred Spring at Mecca (Saudi Arabia)

THE POET

"The ultimate end of all human activity is Life—glorious, powerful, exuberant. All human art must be subordinated to this final purpose and the value of everything must be determined with reference to its life yielding capacity. The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will force and nerves us to face the trials of life manfully. All that brings drowsiness and makes us shut our eyes to Reality—on the mastery of which alone life depends—is a message of decay and death. There should be no opium-eating in Art. The dogma of Art for the sake of Art is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power".

This statement of Iqbal shows the high idea he had of poetry and of the mission of the poet. Poetry is, in his own words, "the radiance of true philosophy and a complete science"; its object is to assist man in his struggle against all that is ugly by appealing to the noblest elements of his nature. The role of art is above all social: it ought to be a guide for mankind. Iqbal criticised the decadent tendencies of his century in music, in architecture, in painting and in literature. "The inspiration of a single decadent soul", he said, "can prove to be more disastrous for a people than all the battalions of an Attila or a Chingez". And he asserted that the spiritual health of a nation depends upon the kind of inspiration which moves its poets and artists.

He condemned Art for Art's sake in unequivocal terms: the true poet ought not to be a mere maker of music but an Awakener; he ought to live not outside society but in the middle of the people whose cause he has made his own.

O wise men! it is good to have a thirst for knowledge,
But of what use is knowledge that cannot apprehend Reality?
The ultimate end of Art is to attain the warmth of immortal life,
What are a spasm or two of that fire which dies out like
    a spark?
Without a miracle, it is not possible to arouse nations;
That Art is useless which does not possess the miraculous
    powers of the Staff of Moses.

* * *

A melody must nourish itself on the madness of love,
It must become like a fire dissolved in the blood of life.

A melody which has no meaning is sterile,
Its heat is like the fire of dying embers.
The skilled master improves upon Nature,
He lays bare her secrets before our eyes,
He creates another universe
And bestows a new life upon our hearts.

The diversity of Iqbal is extraordinary. He has written lyrical, philosophical, epic and metaphysical poetry. He has written elegies, odes, satires, *rubaiyat* (Quatrains). He has expressed himself both in Urdu and Persian, with equal ease. His works which, constitute a synthesis of Classicism and Romanticism, have a universal appeal because Man is their essential theme.

Philosophical poetry

Among his best known long poems must be mentioned *Asrar-i-Khudi*, *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*, *Bandagi Namah* and *Javid Namah*.

In *Asrar-i-Khudi*, Iqbal sets forth the fundamental principles of his philosophy.

In *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*, he lays the foundations of the ideal society in which the Perfect Man will attain maturity.

Bandagi Namah (The Book of Bondage) describes the evils engendered by slavery and stresses the idea that human personality can only develop in an atmosphere of freedom. Slavery in all its forms, political or economic, impedes the creative urge of man.

But the master-piece of Iqbal is *Javid Namah* (The Book of Eternity). This poem has become a classic. We give here a brief analysis of it.

Iqbal, accompanied by Rumi who is to him what Virgil is to Dante, visits different planets where he meets prominent figures of history who, in their dialogues, throw light on eternal verities. It has been said rightly about this poem that it is "the Divine Comedy of the East".

"How to get into the presence of God, how to smash mountains of water and earth? He who commands is beyond the order of creation and we are nearly throttled by the iron hand of destiny."

It is with this anguished question of man, conscious of his limitations in front of the Infinite, that the poem opens. How can we overcome the denseness of matter, transcend our human condition and cross the threshold of the Heavenly Kingdom? This uneasiness casts on the beginn-

ing of the journey a veil of sadness which reminds us of Dante lost in his dark forest:

"Man, in this many-coloured world, is at every instant full of laments, like the lute...... The sea, the desert, the hills and the grass are deaf and dumb, deaf and dumb are the sky, the sun and the moon. Even though high up in the skies are stars without number, each one of them is ever more solitary than the other, each one is just as desperate as we are, like us vagrant in the blue expanse of the skies. How like a caravan which has not taken sufficient provisions for a long journey, for which infinite are the skies and slow the nights! Perhaps this world is a prey and we are the hunters: or are we not perhaps only forgotten prisoners? Oh, happy the day that does not belong to Time, whose morning has neither noon nor evening—a day from whose light the spirit draws light and in which mysterious things are made visible by the splendour of its radiance!"

Professor Bausani has emphasised in an article the essential differences between the voyage of Dante and that of Iqbal. "Dante, he says, starts on his voyage to purify himself so as to be able to contemplate God.. Iqbal's voyage of conquest is possible only after Dante has returned from his voyage of purification". He has likewise remarked that the *Divine Comedy* stands "under the sign of redeeming femininity while the "Book of Eternity" stands under the heavy and distant omen of the inimitable power of man".

The *Book of Eternity* begins with a prologue in which, on the first day of Creation, a quarrel takes place between Heaven and Earth: the latter is rebuked for her gross materialism but receives nevertheless a consolatory promise from God that "a man will be sent to her who will be the messenger of a spiritual regeneration".

The great adventure across the skies and the planets then begins. In the Moon, Iqbal enters into a discussion with the Indian sage Vishvamitra and he meditates on the four great manifestations of Divine Power—Budha, Zoroaster, Christ and Muhammad.

In the planet Mercury, he has talks on Capitalism, Communism, the East and the West, with great politicians such as Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Sa'id Halim Pasha. He recognises the positive role of Communism, namely, to destroy a decadent world but, in his opinion, it lacks the spirituality which is alone capable of creating a truly new world. Concerning

the relations between the East and the West, the poet thinks that the salvation of humanity lies in a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures.

In the West, the Intellect is the source of life,
In the East, Love is the basis of life.
Through Love, the Intellect gets acquainted with Reality,
And the Intellect gives stability to the works of Love.
Arise, and lay the foundations of a new world
By wedding the Intellect to Love!

The climate of Venus is very anti-European; the Adam of planet Mars has not yielded to the advances of Satan whom he has hurled down to the Earth.

Jupiter is inhabited by the three great "heretics" of Islam—Hallaj (crucified at Bhagdad in 922), Ghalib (an Indian poet, 1796-1869) and the Persian poetess Tahira (strangled at Teheran in 1852). It is curious to note, Professor Bausani remarks, that it is also on Jupiter that Dante had placed two pagan souls, those of Rifeus and Trojan.

Saturn has given hospitality to "traitors"—traitors not to their countries but to the great community of believers. The anger of Iqbal against them who have betrayed their ideal is as strong as that of Dante who had thrown them into the lowest depths of Hell.

On the boundaries of the created world, a soul comes to meet the poet singing: "No angels, no Paradise, no huri, no God, only a handful of earth burnt by the diurnal desire of the heart". It is the spirit of Nietzsche, the great destroyer, whose works are nevertheless "beyond reason and wisdom".

Iqbal then reaches Paradise, a place of wonders with its fairy gardens, its sumptuous palaces and its lovely huris. But even this spectacle does not satisfy him because it is God who is the real object of his search: "Embrace once again the rose-bush, drink water and the dew.... O pale being, what art thou searching for in the morning breeze?"

The poet has finally a vision of the Eternal Beauty and the poem ends with a hymn which is like a cry of victory and a song of deliverance.

Eschew the East and be not bewitched by the
wizardry of the West.
As both the ancient and the modern are not
worth a grain of barley.

O thou who art in the caravan!
Travel with all but go thine own way.
Thou comest shining more brilliantly than the
world-illumining Sun.
Live so that your radiance may kindle every
atom of the universe.

Lyrical poetry

Iqbal has worked a veritable revolution in the lyrical poetry of his age which tended to confine itself within a very narrow domain and was limited to the expression of a few eternal sentiments, always in the same manner. He has considerably broadened its horizon by introducing in it hitherto unknown subjects treated in a language both rich and varied.

We shall quote only a few passages extracted from various poems.

In Taskhir-i-Fitrat (The Conquest of Nature) Iqbal narrates the story of Satan's disobedience and of the fall of man. Satan is described as a very romantic character animated by an intense love of life and a passion for action. His indomitable pride and his independence of mind explain his tragic destiny. When God orders him to pay homage to man, he replies:

I am not such a fool as to prostrate myself before
Adam like other ethereal creatures.
It is my fire which makes blood course through the
veins of creation
Adam is made of clay, I take my origin from fire;
I have the speed of the tempest, the roar of thunder,
Thou hast created the starry spheres: I cause them
to move.
I am the heart of the world, the life latent in all things;
I have never asked for prostration from insignificant
creatures like men.
I am the Devil without a Hell and the Judge without
the Day of Judgment!
Thou givest life to the body, I infuse fire into life!
Thou showest the way to peaceful repose, I incite
man to struggle unceasingly.
Man made of perishable clay, stupid and short-sighted,
Is born in Thy lap but attaineth maturity in mine!

Punished for his disobedience, Satan plans the fall of man by tempting Adam. He tells Adam that life in Eden is dull and insipid, that it is without warmth because devoid of passion:

> A life of incessant struggle is better than perpetual peace,
> The dove becomes a falcon when struggling to free itself from
> a snare.
> Thou dost not know anything but prostration;
> Hold thyself upright like a cypress, O thou who art slow
> in action!
> Dost thou not know that union means the end of desire?
> The secret of eternal life lies in incomplete consummation.
> How sweet it is to make life a continuous struggle,
> To melt with a single breath the heart of the mountain,
> the forest and the desert!
> I am an imperfect burning, I am an all-aching desire.
> I abandon certitude for doubt because I am the victim of
> a ceaseless quest.

The interest of *Hudi* (The Song of the Arab Cameleer) lies primarily in its cadence and rythm. The bedouin who crosses the desert with a camel as his only companion symbolises the poet who, with his song, restores the failing energy of his people:

> O my fleet-footed dromedary,
> My gazelle of Tartary;
> O my dirham and my dinar,
> O my unique treasure,
> My rising fortune,
> Quicken your step, our destination is not far!
> Thou art charming and graceful,
> Thou art a proud beauty,
> The rival of the huri;
> Thou art the envy of Leila.
> O thou daughter of the desert,
> Quicken your step, our destination is not far!

In *Sarud-i-Anjum* (The Symphony of the Stars) the poet describes the stars as tireless seekers of adventure ceaselessly in search of new worlds.

Man, on the contrary, unconscious of his great destiny, gets engrossed in the petty affairs of his daily life.

Our system is our life,
Our ecstatic march is our rythm;
In our endless wanderings
Lies eternal life.
The Heavens evolve at our desire,
We watch and move on!
Thy more we regard as less,
Thy year is but an instant to us.
O thou who art holding an ocean in thy bosom,
Thou art content with a dewdrop!
We roll on in search of other worlds,
We watch and move on!

There is also an astonishing poem, written by Iqbal in the last years of his life, which he has entitled: "Lenin, the Song of Angels and the Injunction of God". It would be wrong to see in it a change in the orientation of his thought: it is rather a deepening of it. It is not the first time that Iqbal denounces the misdeeds of Capitalism but it is obvious that this poem reveals a more definite and more vigorous consciousness of social problems; we find in it a quivering rage made of passion and lucidity.

Lenin, after his death, is summoned before God Whom he addresses in the following terms:

O Thou whose signs are manifest everywhere in
    animate and inanimate Nature,
It is true that Thou art Eternal and Living;
But how could I realise that Thou didst exist
When every moment the views of the wise were
    changing?
To-day, after seeing with my own eyes,
I acknowledge the existence of realms which I pre-
    viously thought to be a mere fancy of the Church.
If Thou permitest me, I would fain ask Thee a question
To which the discourses of philosophers have offered
    no answer:
Where is the man whose God Thou art?
Is he the son of earth who lives beneath the skies?

For the East, gods are the whites of Europe;
For the West, gods are the glittering metals.
This knowledge, this science, this art, this statecraft
Suck the blood of man while preaching equality.
The colour that one sees on faces at eventide
Is the miracle worked by either rouge or drinks.
Thou art All Powerful and Just, but in Thy world
The lot of the hapless labourer is very hard.
When will the ship of Capitalism be wrecked?
The world is waiting for the Day of Reckoning!

This simple statement of facts by Lenin stirs up all the angels who sing in chorus :

The Intellect is still unbridled, Love hath not yet found its
station,
O Painter Divine, Thy Picture is yet unfinished,
The exploiters and the monks lie in wait for mankind;
In Thy Universe the old order still continueth!

God then orders them to undermine the foundations of a society which is based on iniquity and to reconstruct it anew:

Arise and awake the poor of My World,
Shake the doors and walls of the mansions of the rich,
Kindle the blood of slaves with the fire of faith,
Give the humble sparrow the strength to fight the falcon!
The day of the sovereignty of the masses draweth near!
Destroy the relics of olden times wherever you find them,
Set fire to every ear of corn in the field
Which faileth to provide a livelihood for the peasant!
Modern civilisation is but a glass blower's workshop,
Impart a noble frenzy to the Poet of the East.

* * *

Man is still a miserable prey to Imperialism;
That Man should prey upon his fellowmen is a terrible calamity.
The tinsel of modern civilisation dazzles the eyes,
Yet it is nothing but the false gleam of imitation pearls.
The science on which the sages of the West pride themselves
Is nothing but a sword in the blood-stained hands of rapacity.
No magic formula of politics can strengthen a civilisation
Which rests on the shifting sands of Capitalism.

THE GHAZALS

The Ghazal is a poetic form which is reckoned among the most ancient and the most popular in Urdu and Persian literatures. Iqbal has completely renewed it and enriched it with new themes. We give here a few examples of it:

The ray of the world-illumining sun,
Is a spark of your Promethean fire;
In your creative powers lie concealed the germs
of another world.
Thou dost not value the paradise given unto you;
Thy true heaven dost not lie anywhere but within thine
own Self,
And in the precious gift of thy blood and thy life,
O Thou, Body of earth, behold thy inexpressible reward,
Which crowneth thy tireless efforts; struggle, and
behold!

* * *

I have made Venus my slave;
The pearly Moon adores me;
And I have forged the majestic intellect for mastering
and dominating the world.
I have gone deep into the profundities of the earth,
I have come out of it with drunken steps,
And the blue sky has spread out under my burning feet
A precious carpet as soft as velvet,
The grains of earth and the resplendent sun obey me as
genii obey the magician.

* * *

When Love imparts self-knowledge to man,
The mysteries of imperialism are laid bare to the slaves;
Whether it be 'Attar, Rumi, Razi[1] or Ghazali[2]
Nothing can be achieved without labour which begins
with the sighs of dawn.
O wise guide! although the travellers be slow of foot,

1. Iranian Poets.
2. Arab Philosopher.

Do not lose thy confidence in them, they do not lack zeal,
O bird of the Celestial Regions, Death is far better than
such livelihood
As would weaken your power of flight!
That fakir is better than Darius and Alexander
Whose poverty exudes the qualities of a lion of God,
Truth and fearlessness are the qualities of the brave,
The lions of God are strangers to the ways of a fox.

* * *

Beyond the stars, there are yet other worlds,
Love has yet to pass through many trials
These infinite prospects of the world are not without life,
There are un-numbered caravans on the march!
Be not content with this world of perfume and colour,
Other gardens and other nests also exist.
Why dost thou mourn the loss of oneness,
There are other places for heaving sighs and uttering laments.
Thou art a falcon royal, for thy flight
There are other firmaments that stretch before thy sight.
The time is past when I was alone in this assembly,
Now there are others who share my secrets.

* * *

Little flower fast asleep,
Rise narcissus-like, and peep;
Lo! the flower drops and dies
Wasted by cold griefs; arise:
Now that birdsong fills the air
And muezzins call to prayer,
Listen to the burning sighs
Of the passionate hearts, and rise:
Out of leaden sleep,
Out of slumber deep
Arise!
Out of slumber deep
Arise!
Now the sun, that doth adorn
With his rays the brow of morn,

Doth suffuse the cheeks thereof
With the crimson blush of love.
Over mountains, over plains
Caravans take route again;
Bright and world-beholding eyes,
Gaze upon the world, and rise:
Out of leaden sleep,
Out of slumber deep
Arise!
Out of slumber deep
Arise!
All the Orient doth lie
Like strewn dust along the way
Or like a still lament
And a wasted sigh all spent:
Yet each atom of this earth
Is a gaze of tortured birth.
Under Ind's and Persia's skies,
Through Arabia's plains, rise:
Out of leaden sleep,
Out of slumber deep
Arise!
Out of slumber deep
Arise!
See, thy ocean is at rest,
Slumberous as a desert waste;
Yea, no waxing or increase
Ever disturbs thy ocean's peace.
Never thy ocean knoweth storm
Or Leviathan's dreaded swarm:
Rend its breast and, billow-wise
Swelling into tumult, rise:
Out of leaden sleep,
Out of slumber deep
Arise!
Out of slumber deep
Arise!
Listen to this subtlety

That reveals the mystery;
Empire is the body's dust,
Spirit, true Religion's trust;
Body lives and spirit lives
By the life their union gives.
Lance in hand, and sword at thigh.
Cloaked, and with thy prayer-mat, arise:
        Out of leaden sleep.
        Out of slumber deep
                Arise!
        Out of slumber deep
                Arise!
Thou art true and worshipful
Guardian of eternal Rule,
Thou the left hand and the right
Of the World's-possessor's might.
Shackled slave of earthy race,
Thou art Time, and thou art Space:
Wine of faith that fear defies
Drink, and from doubt's prison rise!
        Out of leaden sleep,
        Out of slumber deep
                Arise!
        Out of slumber deep
                Arise!
Against Europe I protest,
And the attraction of the West:
Woe to Europe and her charm,
Swift to capture and disarm:
Europe's hordes with flame and fire
Desolate the world entire!
Architect of Sanctuaries,
Earth awaits rebuilding; arise!
        Out of leaden sleep,
        Out of slumber deep
                Arise!
                Out of slumber deep
                Arise!

WHEN the world-illumining sun rushed upon Night like a brigand,
My weeping bedewed the face of the rose.
My tears washed away sleep from the eye of the narcissus,
My passion wakened the grass and made it grow.
The Gardener tried the power of my song,
He sowed my verse and reaped a sword.
In the soil he planted only the seed of my tears
And wove my lament with the garden, as warp and woof.
Though I am but a mote, the radiant sun is mine;
Within my bosom are a hundred dawns.
My dust is brighter than Jamshid's cup,[1]
It knows things that are yet unborn in the world.
My thought hunted down and slung from the saddle a deer
That has not yet leaped forth from the covert of non-existence.
Fair is my garden ere yet the leaves are green;
Unborn roses are hidden in the skirt of my garment.
I struck dumb the musicians where they were gathered together,
I smote the heart-string of the universe,
Because the lute of my genius hath a rare melody;
Even to comrades my song is strange.
I am born in the world as a new sun,
I have not learned the ways and fashions of the sky:
Not yet have the stars fled before my splendour,
Not yet is my quicksilver astir;
Untouched is the sea by my dancing rays,
Untouched are the mountains by my crimson hue.
The eye of existence is not familiar with me;
I rise trembling, afraid to show myself.
From the East my dawn arrived and routed Night,
A fresh dew settled on the rose of the world.
I am waiting for the votaries that rise at dawn:
Oh, happy they who shall worship my fire!
I have no need for the ear of To-day,
I am the voice of the poet of To-morrow.

1. Jamshid, one of the legendary Kings of Iran who, it is said, possessed a marvelous cup which mirrored the whole world.

My own age does not understand my deep meanings,
My Joseph is not for this market.
I despair of my old companions,
My Sinai burns for the Moses who is yet to come.
Their sea is silent, like dew,
But my dew is storm-ridden, like the ocean.
My song is of another world than theirs:
This bell calls other travellers to take the road.
Many a poet was born after his death,
Opened our eyes when his own were closed,
And journeyed forth again from nothingness,
Like roses blossoming over the earth of his grave.
Albeit caravans have passed through this desert,
They passed, as a camel steps, with little sound.
But I am a lover; loud crying is my faith:
The clamour of Judgment Day is one of my minions.
My song exceeds the range of the chord,
Yet I do not fear that my lute will break.
'T were better for the waterdrop not to know my torrent,
Whose fury would madden the sea itself.
No river will contain my Oman,[1]
My flood requires whole seas to hold it.
Unless the bud expand into a bed of roses,
It is unworthy of my spring-cloud's bounty.
Lightnings slumber within my soul,
I sweep over mountain and plain;
Wrestle with my sea, if thou art a plain;
Receive my lightning, if thou art a Sinai.
The Fountain of Life hath been given me to drink,
I have been made an adept in the mystery of Life.
The speck of dust was vitalised by my burning songs:
It unfolded wings and became a firefly.
No one hath told the secret which I will tell,
Or threaded a pearl of thought like mine.
Come, if thou would'st know the secret of everlasting life:

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1. The Sea of Oman, the name given by the Arabs to the Persian Gulf.

Come, if thou would'st win both earth and heaven:

Asrar-i-Khudi (Prologue: Extract).

Look, O thou enthralled by Yesterday and Tomorrow!
Behold another world in thine own heart:
Thou hast sown the seed of darkness in the clay,
Thou hast imagined Time as a line;
Thy thought measures the length of Time
With the scale of night and day.
Thou mak'st this line a girdle on thine infidel waist;
Thou art an advertiser of falsehood, like idols.
Thou wert the Elixir, but thou hast become a speck of dust;
Thou wert born the conscience of Truth, but thou hast become a lie!
Art thou a Muslim? Then cast off this girdle!
Be a candle to the feast of the religion of the free!
Knowing not the origin of Time—
Thou art ignorant of everlasting Life.
How long wilt thou be a thrall of night and day?
Learn the mystery of Time from the words "I have a time with God".
Phenomena arise from the March of Time,
Life is one of Time's Mysteries.
The cause of Time is not the revolution of the sun;
Time is everlasting, but the sun does not last for ever.
Time is joy and sorrow, festival and fast;
Time is the secret of moonlight and sunlight.
Thou hast extended Time, like Space,
And hast fled, like a scent, from thine own garden;
Thou hast made thy prison with thine own hand.
Our Time, which has neither beginning nor end,
Blossoms from the flower-bed of our mind.
To know its root quickens the living with new life;
Its being is more spendid than the dawn,
Life is of Time, and Time is of Life :
"Do not abuse Time:" was[1] the command of the Prophet.

Asrar-i-Khudi
Extracts from Chapter 17
"Time is a sword".

1. Do not vilify time because time is God.

How long shall I wait for one to share my grief?
How long must I search for a confidant?
O Thou whose face lends light to the moon and the stars!
Withdraw thy fire from my soul.
Take back what Thou hast put in my breast,
Remove the stabbing radiance from my mirror,
Or give me one old comrade
To be the mirror of mine all-burning love!
In the sea wave tosses side by side with wave:
Each hath a partner in its emotion.
In heaven star consorts with star,
And the bright moon lays her head on the knees of Night.
Morning touches Night's dark side,
And Today throws itself against To-morrow.
One river loses its being in another,
A waft of air dies in perfume.
There is dancing in every nook of the wilderness,
Madman dances with madman.
Because in thine essence Thou art single,
Thou hast evolved for Thyself a whole world.
I am as the tulip of the field,
In the midst of company I am alone.
I beg of Thy grace a sympathising friend,
And adept in the mysteries of my nature.
A friend endowed with madness and wisdom,
One that knoweth not the phantom of vain things,
That I may confide my lament to his soul,
And see again my face in his heart.
His image I will mould of mine own clay,
I will be to him both idol and worshipper.

Asrar-i-Khudi
Extracts from the final
Invocation.

Long have I sought thee, O elusive Reality!
My heart is aflame in expectation of meeting thee.
A sweet music throbs in the depths of silence;
It were better if I lost myself in the ecstasy of music.
My hands are folded in prayer
But my mind does not find peace.
An aching voice within me cries:
"Of what avail is prayer to the lover of life?"
The moth intoxicated by its crazy dance
Said to the burning candle:
"The secret of life does not lie in thy flame
Nor in the sacrifice I offer to love".
Be not afraid of bruising thy heart,
This fragile urn howsoever prone to breakage;
The more it is hurt in the struggle of life,
The more it is precious and dear to the Creator.
Live and in living the Mystery will become brighter,
Let thy being consume itself in the full splendour of light!

* * *

Of little account are profit and loss,
Thy defeats can become victories!
Of little account are yesterday, to-day and to-morrow,
Thy face reflects the vastness of eternity!
Slave! Thou art but a streak of water straying in the desert.
A frail bubble at the mercy of mighty elements!
Dost thou forget that this handful of perishable clay
Contains the creative and boundless spirit?
Let Adam stand up and order: "Let there be light!"
Reduce to ashes the heavens and the earth,
Create a world which is thine own handiwork!
In truth, thou art the master of the Universe:
Thou art a radiant and all-consuming sun!

(Adaptation translation)

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